



# Antelope Horn

Newsletter of the Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc.  
Member of the Conference of California Historical Societies  
May, 2024

## Meetings:

### Regular Meetings:

- 2nd Thursday of the month (except July, August); 5:30 pm.
- Rosamond Public Library -  
3611 Rosamond Blvd, Rosamond, CA

### Board Meetings:

- 4th Thursday of the month as needed;  
4 pm; all are welcome, email for  
directions to location.

**Hello to all our Kern Antelope Historical Society Members and Friends.**

- ❖ **What: Regular Meeting**
- ❖ **When: Thursday, May 9th (2nd Thursday)**
- ❖ **Time: 5:30 pm**
- ❖ **Where: Rosamond Public Library, Rosamond, CA**
- ❖ **Speaker: Steve Ptomey, M.A., RPA — The History of Ft. Tejon**

**WEBSITE:** [www.kahs1959.org](http://www.kahs1959.org) **EMAIL:** [info@kahs1959.org](mailto:info@kahs1959.org)  
**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/](http://www.facebook.com/KAHS1959/)

## **Steve Ptomey M.A., RPA — on the History of Fort Tejon State Historic Park**

The Kern Antelope Historical Society is very happy to welcome Steve Ptomey to our May meeting where he will present a program on the history of Fort Tejon, a state historic park located west of Rosamond along the "Grapevine" section of the I-5 in Lebec.

Born in Porterville California, Steven received his B.A. in Anthropology from Cal State University Bakersfield, and a M.A. in Archaeology from the University of Leicester in the UK. He served as an Archaeologist for the US Forest Service, State Parks and Caltrans. He returned to Parks in 2007 as a Park Interpreter II at Colonel Allensworth SHP. He was promoted to Interpreter III in 2009 and served as the District's Chief Interpreter and Tejon Sector manager until early 2020.

Currently Steve is the Cultural Resource Program Manager at the Great Basin District, of California State Parks, and manages the cultural resources, special events, filming and concessions programs.

Fort Tejon in California is a former United States Army outpost which was active, off and on, from June 24, 1854, until September 11, 1864, just over ten years. The fort's location protected the San Joaquin Valley from the south and west. The fort's mission was to suppress stock rustling and protect settlers from attacks by discontented Californios (pre-statehood residents) and Native American tribes, including the Paiute and Mojave, and to monitor the less aggressive Emigdiano living nearby. The Emigdiano, who were closely related to the Chumash of the coastal and interior lands to the west, had several villages near Fort Tejon. After the earlier Spanish and Mexican colonial Indian Reductions, they were generally cooperative with the European-American settlers and the U.S. Army.

Today, Ft. Tejon is a state Historic park, with restored adobes from the original fort and the park's museum features exhibits on army life and local history. The park also has a number of beautiful 400 year-old Valley Oak trees and California condors have been known to show up. They have had a number of interesting historical events from the active days of the fort, including Civil War reenactments and other living history programs.

Peter Lebeck's grave is there, near the Lebeck Oak. The town of Lebec was named after him. Peter was an early resident of Kern County but little is known about him except that he was killed by a bear and buried under the valley oak which bears his name, in 1837. There are plenty of tales about him and where he came from but most have not been confirmed.

Ft. Tejon is also known for having a part in the Camel Corp, or more correctly, the "Camel Experiment", as the Ft. Tejon Historical Association





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calls it. At any rate, camels were brought to Ft Tejon as part of an experiment to see if they would be more practical to use for freight than horses, mules or oxen. Unfortunately the experiment failed for a number of different reasons and after a number of months the 31 camels at Ft. Tejon were transferred to Captain Hancock at the Los Angeles Depot. Although there is much recorded history of the 'Camel Corp' purchased by the U.S. military, there are also many rumors and half-truths that have been passed off as history. But it is a fascinating topic.

Another noteworthy event was the Fort Tejon earthquake of 1857 on February 9th. One of the largest recorded earthquakes in the United States, with an estimated moment magnitude of 7.9, it ruptured the southern part of the San Andreas Fault for a length of about 225 miles. Although it was strongest farther north, the event is referred to as the Fort Tejon earthquake, because that was the location of the greatest damage.

Most of the adobe buildings at Fort Tejon were badly damaged and several people were injured there. More buildings were destroyed along a twenty-mile stretch between Fort Tejon and southeast to Elizabeth Lake, a sag pond that was formed directly on the San Andreas fault. Streams and springs experienced disturbances in San Diego and Santa Barbara Counties, while the Kern River, Kern Lake, and Los Angeles River all spilled over their banks. Farther north in Santa Clara County the flow of well water was affected. Ground cracks from liquefaction of swampy ground were observed near the Pueblo de Los Angeles and in the Oxnard Plain, and ground fissures were reported near the Los Angeles, Santa Ana, and Santa Clara Rivers. Much of the area where the earthquake hit hardest, to the north, were thinly populated so the effects were not as bad but also fewer reports from people were available.

Ft Tejon is a wonderfully restored historical site, full of great history and located in a beautiful setting.

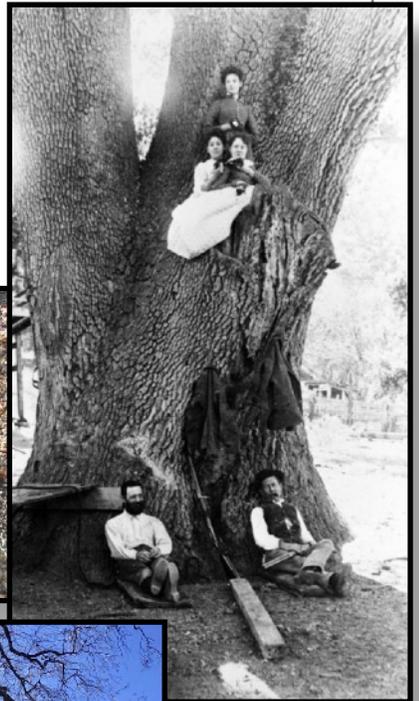
[https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=585](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=585)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1857\\_Fort\\_Tejon\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1857_Fort_Tejon_earthquake)

<https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Lebeck](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Lebeck)

<https://forttejon.org/camel.html>



Camel at Drum Barracks, San Pedro, California (1863 or earlier) Only known surviving photo of the U.S. Camel Corps, Found at westcoastcwc.com, this image is of a camel tied up outside what appears to be a frontier location; the photo is captioned, "A member of the legendary southwestern 'Camel Corps' stands at ease at the Drum Barracks military facility, near California's San Pedro harbor."

\* Remember that Jeff Lapidus included this picture by Rudolph D'Heureuse in his book which was available at our January meeting when Lapidus spoke about "The Mojave Road in 1863".

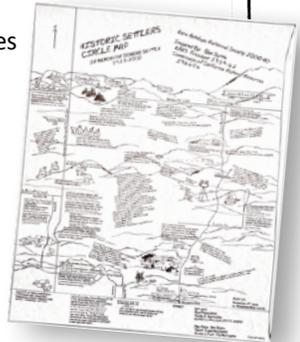
ABOVE—The tree under which Peter Lebeck was buried, and where his epitaph was carved, in an 1890 photograph; LEFT—current photo.



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Here is the link for **Gretchen Winfrey’s presentation on the Historic Settlers Circle Map** from our last meeting: [https://youtu.be/w7Fy\\_7B\\_QGc](https://youtu.be/w7Fy_7B_QGc). By the way, if you were unable to attend, the maps are available for sale for \$4 each (\$3 for members.)

I hope the information Gretchen shared got you to thinking and remembering stories about some of these sites or maybe stories of places you know of that would be just as interesting. If you have questions or more information, please share with us. Remember that the Kern Antelope Historical Society is all about trying to keep the rich history of the Antelope Valley, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Kern counties, alive and remembered for future generations.



Some things we heard from the audience that evening:

- Besides the school district that existed at Domino, we learned that several long-time residents of the valley, including Frank Lane and Cecil Burton, got their drivers licenses from the old community near 170th W., between Ave. A and Rosamond Blvd.
- Terry Burton reported seeing wild horses when he got off the school bus, in the Backus area, a ‘few’ years back. These were the black horses from Oak Creek which can still be seen today in the Tehachapis if you know where to look.
- The tailings still exist from the Hamilton Mill which processed ore from Ezra’s Lida Mine. (which is shown at the bottom of the map just south of Rosamond Blvd.) and Terry also shared that the mill was, in fact, in that spot. Below is a recent photo of the tailings. This is just west of 65th St. West and Rosamond Blvd on the south side. It’s hard to tell because of all the mustard and grasses, but those bumps and the white spots between all the growth is what is visible now. The highest pile is probably around 6 feet tall.

BELOW—Chances are you have driven by many times and never noticed these little hills of dirt or maybe figured they were piles of blow sand. Fortunately Cecil Burton shared this information with us and it matches what’s on the map. We hope to hear from others of you with similar bits of history, pictures of places from ‘back in the day’, and other interesting parts the story of the Antelope Valley.



*ABOVE—A photo of the Oak Creek horses from September, 2016, taken in the Tehachapis near Oak Creek Pass.*





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**Reminder: Membership—Time to Renew**

The KAHS will begin collecting dues in **May** for the 2024-2025 year. You can bring cash, checks, or use Zelle. See the membership form below, this page, for prices and how to 'zelle', if interested.



May Day is a European festival of ancient origins marking the beginning of summer, usually celebrated on May 1st, halfway between the Northern Hemisphere's spring equinox and June solstice. In the United States May Day was celebrated by early European settlers. In some parts of the United States, May baskets are made. These are small baskets usually filled with flowers or treats and left at someone's doorstep. The giver rings the bell and runs away. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May\\_Day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_Day)



May Day festivities at National Park Seminary in Maryland, 1907

**Click on the link below for ALL the KAHS videos!**



Check out the KAHS videos which are available on YouTube. Or visit the website for more information about Antelope Valley history. Copies of recent newsletters are available, as well as other information. Follow us on Facebook for reminders about meetings and other items of historical interest. You can always contact us by email.

- ★ Website: [www.kahs1959.org](http://www.kahs1959.org)
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- ★ KAHS YouTube Videos: <http://kahs1959.org/Videos/videos.html>



**Kern Antelope Historical Society - Membership Application**

Mail to: Kern Antelope Historical Society; PO Box 1255, Rosamond, CA 93560

	Membership Type	Dues	Amount Paid
Name _____	Student/ Active Military	\$5	_____
Mail Address _____	Individual	\$15	_____
City, ST, Zip _____	Couple	\$20	_____
Phone _____	Family	\$30	_____
Email _____	Business	\$35	_____
Date _____			

Note: • Club Year is June 1st through May 31st of the following year; new members, paying after February 1st, pay only half.  
• Zelle: [info@kahs1959.org](mailto:info@kahs1959.org) You may now use the following cell number for Zelle payments, also: (661) 609-8757.



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The Kern Antelope Historical Society greatly appreciates its business members. We hope you will support them and say thanks when you see them.

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## For Sale by KAHS

### Books - \$11 (\*\$8) Each:

Here Roamed the Antelope  
Bears - Borax and Gold  
Along the Rails from Lancaster to Mojave  
The Antelopes Left and the Settle-ers Came  
In Love with Life in Lancaster (Hard Times  
1927-1932)  
Antelope Valley Pioneers  
Castles in the Valley - Shea's Castle  
A Page in the History of Antelope Valley: the Arthur  
Pickus Story: His Home for Seventy Five Years  
Mojave, A Rich History of Rails, Mining and Flight  
Gold-Fever - 40 Years Digging Antelope Valley  
History  
Antelope Valley News and Views During Part of the  
Great Depression 1925-1935

**Video DVD - \$15:** Antelope Valley Yesteryears

**Maps - \$4 (\*\$3):** Historic Settlers Circle Map

**Online Book:** *Glimpse of the Prehistory of Antelope Valley*

*\*Members' Discount Prices in Parentheses*

## 2023-2024 Executive Board

### Officers:

President: Gretchen Winfrey      winfrey3314@yahoo.com  
Vice President: Delores Julian      ddjulirosa@yahoo.com  
Secretary: Janet Winters      poppiesrme@gmail.com  
Treasurer: Kelly Gonzalez      gonzakel@sbcglobal.net

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Chavonne Sladek

**WEBSITE:** [www.kahs1959.org](http://www.kahs1959.org)    **EMAIL:** [info@kahs1959.org](mailto:info@kahs1959.org)

### General Meetings:

Second Thursday of the Month, September through June  
5:30 pm - 3611 Rosamond Blvd, Rosamond, CA  
(Exceptions: June, September & December -  
Location to be announced)

### Memberships:

\$5 - Student & Active Military; \$15 - Individual;  
\$20 - Husband & Wife; \$30 - Family; \$35 - Businesses

The Kern Antelope Historical Society was established in 1959 for the purpose of learning and preserving the history of California, especially the Antelope Valley, which includes parts of Los Angeles and Kern counties. Speakers are invited to talk at our monthly meetings about aspects of our various cultures. Subjects range from Indians of the past to the Space Age. The Society offers field trips for members to significant locations in and around the valley throughout the year. Come join us to learn more about the wonders of this area we live in and also meet some new people.

**KERN ANTELOPE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
**P.O. BOX 1255**  
**ROSAMOND, CA 93560**



**Since 1959**